

Ballot Measure 4

Temporary Replacement of U.S. Senator

BALLOT QUESTION

This measure would repeal state law by which the Governor makes a temporary appointment of a person to fill a U.S. Senate vacancy until a special or regular election can be held. Under existing law the seat remains vacant until an appointment is made. Under the initiative the seat would remain vacant until the election is certified and the senate meets. Existing law provides that a special election will be held within 60 to 90 days to fill a vacancy unless the vacancy occurs within 60 days of the primary election for that seat. This initiative does not change that provision.

SHOULD THIS INITIATIVE BECOME LAW?

YES

NO

BALLOT MEASURE SUMMARY

Prepared by the Legislative Affairs Agency

This measure is about filling a vacancy in the U. S. Senate. In some ways it is like a law passed by the state legislature in 2004. Both that law and this measure provide for an election to fill a U.S. Senate vacancy. Both that law and this measure establish the same procedure for the election. But, there is a difference between the 2004 law and this measure. The law passed by the legislature allows the governor to appoint a person to fill the U.S. Senate vacancy until the election is held and the election results are certified. This measure does not authorize appointment of a U.S. Senator at all.

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT

DIRECT ELECTION OF U.S. SENATE VACANCIES

The people, not the Governor, should fill a United States Senate vacancy.

The idea that the people have the right to choose who represents them in a legislative body is as old as democracy itself. In the long history of the world, people have fought for this right and people have died for this right.

You, the citizens of the State of Alaska, now have the power to decide this important issue for yourselves; here, at the ballot box.

You will hear some confusing arguments against this initiative. Some people want to sneak the power of appointment power back into the law. The question is simple, whether the people elect or the governor selects. The only way to make sure that you, not the governor, decides is to vote yes on Proposition 4.

Please join us in defending the right to vote for our U.S. Senator.

Thank you and thanks to the many Alaskans that worked so hard for this day.

TRUST THE PEOPLE

Initiative Sponsors
Eric Croft
Harry Crawford
David Guttenberg

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STATEMENT IN OPPOSITION

This ballot measure is not only unnecessary-it also could have dire consequences for Alaska. It calls for a special election should any vacancy occur in the U.S. Senate - a provision already in State law. However, its passage could have the consequence of leaving Alaska without vital representation in the U.S. Senate until the special election can be held and certified-which will take three to five months.

To avoid this disastrous scenario, the 2004 Alaska Legislature passed a law that not only accomplishes everything Ballot Measure No. 4 originally set out to do but also provides for continuous representation in the U.S. Senate.

Both the Ballot Measure and the new law require that any vacancy in the office of U.S. Senator be filled by a special election. They also require the election be held 60 to 90 days after the vacancy occurs.

But only the existing law, consistent with the 17th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, provides for a "temporary appointment" that would make sure Alaska is represented in the U.S. Senate until the people's choice is certified.

The new law passed by the Legislature enjoyed broad bipartisan support and a pledge from the Legislature not to repeal it for at least two years. It is notable that all of the prime sponsors of this ballot measure voted in favor of the final version of the new law - including the "temporary appointment" provision.

If this ballot measure passes, there is an unacceptable risk that Alaska will be left without a vote or voice in the U.S. Senate for a considerable time. A loss of one Alaska vote could drastically affect what happens in committee - where much of the work affecting Alaska is accomplished. Additionally, a loss of that one Alaska vote could affect the size of our share in the federal transportation budget, the military appropriations budget, federal support of our rural communities, or federal support for a natural gas line or development in ANWR.

Current law assures our voice will be heard, our votes will be counted and our work will be done in Washington with little or no interruption.

Please vote "NO" on Ballot Measure No. 4.

Ralph Seekins
State Senator
George M. Sullivan
Anchorage

The statement printed on this page is the opinion of the author(s) and is presented as submitted to the Division of Elections.